CLAIMS

1. Process for distributing through a network an electronic message associated with a list f recipients, said process comprising the iterated application of the steps of :

a) extracting (54) from said list a first sublist and a second sublist of recipients;
b) identifying (55) a recipient within said first sublist which can be addressed via said network, and
c) transmitting said electronic message and said first sublist to said identified recipient for onward distribution; and
d) applying said steps (a) to (d) to said second sublist of recipients.

2. Process as claimed in claim 1 comprising receiving the message and a list of recipients for onward distribution.

3. Process according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein said message and the list of recipients are contained in a package, the step of transmitting the electronic message to the identified recipient comprising generating a new package comprising the electronic message and the first list.

4. Process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the package is an XML document.

5. Process according to claim 4 wherein said electronic package comprises information defining the size and the date of creation of said electronic message.

6. Process according to any preceding claim wherein the computation of said first and second sublist results in the generation of sublists of similar size.

7. Process as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the first and second sublists together comprise all the recipients listed in the list of recipients from which they are extracted in step (a).

8. Process according to any preceding claim wherein said transmission of the electronic message is performed via a Hyper-Text Transfer Protocol link.

9. Process as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the iterated steps (a) to (d) are carried out in a single node of the network.

10. Process for distributing an electronic message associated with a list of recipients through a network comprising carrying out a process as claimed in any preceding claim in a plurality of nodes

of the network upon receipt at each node of the message and an associated first sublist generated in another of the nodes until the message has been transmitted to all recipients on the list.

11. Process for distributing an electronic package received from a telecommunication network, said package comprising an electronic message accompanied by a list of recipients, said process comprising:

- a) extracting (52) said list of recipients;
- b) determining (53) whether said list of recipients includes at least two items and, if so;
- c) generating (54) a first and a second sublist of recipients extracted from said list;
- d) identifying (55) one particular recipient from said second list which is reachable via said telecommunication network;
- d) generating (56) a first subpackage comprising said electronic document or file with said first sublist;
- e) transmitting (57) said first subpackage to said identified particular recipient;
- applying steps b-f to said second sublist.

12. Process according to claim 11 wherein said package is an XML document comprising said electronic document or file and a list of recipients for said transmission, said XML document comprising information defining the size and the date of creation of said electronic document or file.

13. Process according to claim 11 wherein the size of the first sublist is fixed to be equal to the integer which is immediately superior than half the number of items of the list of recipients.

14. Process according to claim 11 wherein the computation of said first and second sublist results in the generation of sublists of similar size.

15. Process according to claim 11 wherein said transmission of said first subpackage is performed via a Hyper-Text Transfer Protocol link.

16. Publishing agent in the form of a computer program having program code elements for carrying out the process defined in any of claims 1 to 10.

17. Computer program product comprising program code elements for distribution or flooding of an electronic file or document through a telecommunication network, and arranged to execute the steps of:

- generating (41) a package comprising said electronic document or file accompanied by a list of recipients;
- transmitting (43) said package to a first recipient; said first recipient extracting said list of recipients and computing a first sublist and a second sublist of recipients;
- generating (54) a first subpackage comprising said electronic file or document with said first sublist and transmitting said first subpackage to a second recipient which is identified from said first sublist;
- generating (58) a second subpackage comprising said electronic file or document with said second sublist and processing again said second package by said first recipient.

18. Computer program product comprising program code elements for allowing distribution or flooding of one electronic file or document contained within a package including a list of recipients through a telecommunication network, and arranged to execute the steps of:

- receiving (51) said package comprising said electronic document or file accompanied with a list of recipients;
- extracting from said package and said list of recipients a first sublist and a second sublist of recipients;
- generating (54) a first subpackage comprising said electronic file or document with said first sublist and transmitting said first subpackage to a second recipient which is identified from said first sublist as being reachable;
- generating (58) a second subpackage comprising said electronic file or document with said second sublist and processing again said second package by said first recipient.

19. Computer program product in accordance with claim 16 embedded as a component of an operating system.

20. A data communications network wherein at least a subset of nodes comprise program code elements for carrying out a process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 10.